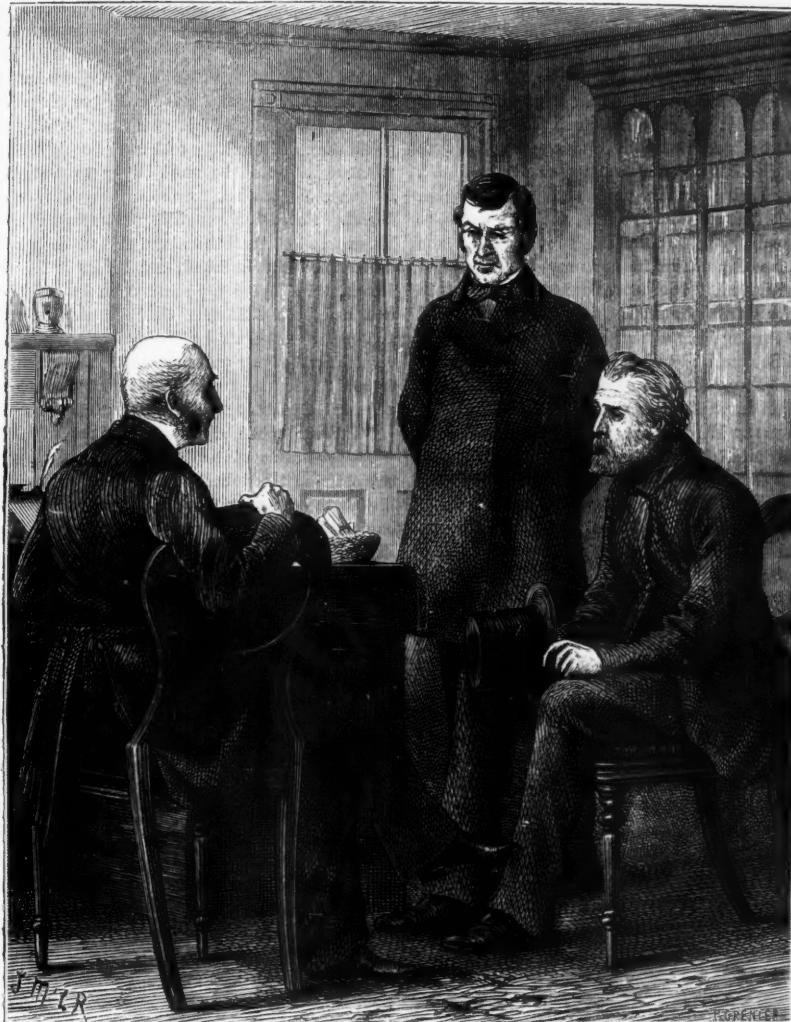


THE QUIETER

Saturday, October 5, 1872.



"Answered the description you had given of your brother"—p. 830.

TWO STORIES IN ONE.

BY WILLIAM GILBERT, AUTHOR OF "DE PROFUNDIS," "SHIRLEY HALL ASYLUM," ETC.

CHAPTER LIV.—A SORROW CANCELLED.

SO great was my surprise at seeing the emerald earring, it was some moments before I could so far recover my self-possession as to be able to think coolly on the subject. Then I began to examine the papers

in which the earring had been folded, and on the outer one I noticed something written in very faint ink. On examining it more narrowly, I easily distinguished it was in the handwriting of Alice. It

merely stated that the earring had been found, wrapped in the paper it was then in, on the floor of her room, the day after my last visit to her. Being in too delicate a state of health to leave the house at the time, she intended writing to tell me that she had found the earring, and that if I would either call or send some one authorised to receive it, she would return it to me. Before, however, carrying out this intention, she fell sick, and she afterwards resolved that when able to leave the house, she would take it herself to Spital Square, and explain how it came into her hands. When she arrived in the square she found the house occupied by strangers, who were unable to give her my address, nor could she obtain it anywhere else in the neighbourhood. As her attempts to find me were fruitless, she determined to keep the earring safely, hoping that good fortune might some day throw in her way the means of restoring it to me. The paper further stated that in case of her death, she wished it to be remembered "that the earring formerly belonged to Mrs. Levesque, of Spital Square, and had been dropped in her room by her daughter, whose name she did not remember, but who had married a French gentleman."

Of the many ideas which at the moment floated through my mind after reading poor Alice's memorandum, the one that struck me most forcibly was the extraordinary integrity she had shown in the matter. That she knew well the value of the earring is certain, for she had often heard my mother speak on the subject. She knew equally well that in Houndsditch and Bethnal Green resided many dishonourable characters who dealt in stolen goods, and that she would not have had the slightest difficulty in disposing of the earring for a large sum of money, though even then at considerably less than its value. Yet, in spite of poverty and privation of the direst description, an idea of the kind, I am fully persuaded, never entered her imagination. It would even be doing her an injustice to say she had resisted the temptation, for I am fully convinced it had been no temptation for her whatever. The earring was not hers, and therefore the idea of disposing of it, or using it to her own benefit, would have been to her impossible. Such a mind as Alice's was incapable of entertaining it.

I had now to determine what steps I would take to clear the reputation of my brother from the stain of dishonesty, as regarded the earring. I could, however, come to no determination, so I resolved to consult my solicitor on the subject, and follow in every respect the advice he might give me.

I had hardly arrived at this conclusion when my maid came to inform me that the brougham was at the door. Without any delay I dressed myself for leaving the house, and on entering the brougham told my coachman to drive to the solicitor's in Lincoln's Inn Fields. When I arrived at his office I was informed that Mr. Jordan was engaged, and

that I should have to wait some little time before I could see him. Trifling as this disappointment was in reality, it gave me considerable uneasiness, being afraid that my courage might fade in the interim; indeed, it was with no little difficulty I maintained it, though in the end I succeeded.

On my introduction into his private office I told Mr. Jordan that I had come to consult him upon a somewhat painful private family matter, and that I wished for his advice in it as much in the light of a friend as of a legal adviser, as I was hardly certain whether it came legitimately within the range of a solicitor's profession. He politely told me in reply that for the moment he would be most happy to place his profession aside, and act for me with equal interest as a friend. There was something so warm and candid in his expression, that the alarm I had been labouring under suddenly vanished, and I felt under no more restraint in laying my mind open before him, than if I had been a Roman Catholic and he my father confessor. I began by explaining to him the circumstances of my unfortunate first marriage, when somewhat to my surprise I found he was already acquainted with everything connected with the affair.

"I never spoke of it to you," he said, "for in whatever business interviews I have had with you, the subject was too delicate for a stranger to mention, but at the same time I was fully aware of every circumstance connected with that unfortunate episode in your life; and I can conscientiously state I keenly sympathised with you in the treatment you received. But is it anything in reference to that you wish now to speak to me upon?"

"No, I can hardly say it is," I replied. "I merely mentioned it as it led in great part to an unfortunate circumstance which took place relative to my only brother. He was naturally much attached to a military life, and his love for it was greatly increased by the conversations he frequently had with my first husband, who, as you know, had been an officer in the French army. My brother's partiality for the military profession occasioned frequent disputes between him and my father. At last my brother unjustifiably absconded from the house when sent on a commission by my father to pay some person connected with his trade a considerable sum of money. After my father's death my brother one morning returned home, dressed in a sort of half-military uniform. On questioning him, he told me that when he had left home he had enlisted in the East India Company's service, from which he had deserted. I had occasion then to leave him in my room for a short time, and on my return learned he had quitted the house, taking with him, as I then erroneously supposed, a valuable emerald and diamond earring belonging to my mother."

I then went on to explain to him how shocked I had been at this, apparently, second act of dishonesty on the part of my brother, and the care I had taken to conceal it from my mother, and the singular manner

in which I had found the earring, completely and satisfactorily exonerating Edmond from the slightest blame in the matter.

"To what cause then do you attribute your brother leaving the house in so abrupt a manner?" inquired Mr. Jordan.

"On that point I can form no conclusion whatever," I replied. "We have not heard one word from him or about him since he left us."

"Have you no idea then where your brother is now?" asked the solicitor.

"None whatever," I replied. "And it is for that reason I came to you this morning to consult you on what steps I had better take for his discovery with as little delay as possible."

After a few moments' consideration the solicitor told me that he would place the matter in the hands of one of his clerks, who should put himself in communication with detective who had been employed by his firm on several occasions.

"And I have no doubt, Lady Morpeth," he continued, "if your brother be still alive we shall be able, sooner or later, to find him. Of course if I want any further information from you on the subject, you will give it to me."

I now inquired of Mr. Jordan what immediate steps he intended to take. He told me he should have an advertisement inserted in the papers, stating that if Mr. Edmond Levesque, son of Mr. Levesque, formerly a silk manufacturer in Spital Square, would call at the office of Mr. Jordan, Lincoln's Inn Fields, he would hear of something greatly to his advantage, and that a reward of twenty pounds would be paid to any one who would give such information as would lead to the discovery of Mr. Edmond Levesque's present address.

As there appeared nothing derogatory to my brother in the advertisement suggested by Mr. Jordan, I made no objection, and it was determined it should appear in the principal newspapers the next morning, and unless an answer came within three days, he would repeat it.

I resolved to wait the three days, and then, even in case there should be no answer to the advertisement, I would go down to Brighton. On the morning of the second day, however, to my great alarm I received telegraphic despatch from a physician in Brighton, with whom I was not acquainted, informing me that my mother was taken seriously ill, and that I had better visit her as soon as I conveniently could. I lost no time in obeying the summons, and in a state of great anxiety, two hours afterwards I was hurrying down in the express train to Brighton. On arriving at my mother's house I was met by her maid, who told me that her mistress was then asleep, and the doctor thought she had better not be disturbed. Impatient as I was to see my dear mother, I easily perceived the danger that might occur should she awake and find me unexpectedly in her room.

I asked the servant in what manner my mother had been taken ill. She told me she could hardly explain how it occurred, but that the day before, when the boy brought the newspaper to the house, she had taken it to my mother, who was seated quietly at her breakfast, and then left her again. On going into the room a short time afterwards to remove the breakfast things, she had found my mother, pale and senseless, in her easy chair, her hand hanging over the arm, and the newspaper on the floor. A doctor was immediately sent for, who for some time feared that life was extinct. At last symptoms of returning animation showed themselves, and in the afternoon she rallied still more.

"The doctor," continued the servant, "considered the state of my mistress so alarming that he told me he would telegraph for you, my lady. This morning she appeared better, but not much, and if I might advise your ladyship, I think you would do well to see the doctor before you go to Mrs. Levesque's room, as he will be better able to tell you what to do."

This I readily agreed to. Finding there was no immediate danger, I began to reflect more calmly on the matter, and remembered the servant had told me that when she discovered my mother in a senseless condition, the paper she had been reading had fallen from her hand, and was lying on the floor beside her chair. I now inquired whether yesterday's newspaper was still in the house, and if so that I should like to have it brought to me. This was done, and on looking down the column of advertisements, my eye fell on the one inserted by the detective for my brother Edmond. Here, then, was a clue to the whole. My mother had evidently seen the advertisement, and the surprise was so great as to throw her into her present condition. There was, however, one consoling incident in the case. Should she recover—and oh, how devoutly I trusted she would!—one half the difficulty of my task would be removed.

Three more days passed without any change in my mother's condition. She slept continuously, being awakened only to receive nourishment. Nor did the doctor consider this altogether a bad symptom, provided it did not last too long.

I now received a letter from Mr. Jordan, telling me that a person had answered the advertisement, saying that he knew the whereabouts of Mr. Edmond Levesque, but that he refused to state it for a less sum than one hundred pounds. Would he be justified in paying that sum should he find the information correct? I immediately telegraphed, "Yes, by all means. Spare no expense, and let me know the result."

During that day my mother slept on in the same manner, and the next morning the doctor told me her pulse was somewhat more feeble than the day before; still he had hopes of her recovery. He had

scarcely quitted the house when I received another telegraphic despatch from Mr. Jordan, requesting me to return to town without delay, as he much wished to see me. In case I did not arrive that day he would write by post.

I now sent off a despatch to Mr. Jordan, informing him that I could not leave Brighton that day, but in case my mother were better on the morrow he would see me without fail. I also requested him to tell the person alluded to in his telegram to be in readiness to see me; and I begged that he would write to me without fail by that night's post.

The next morning I received a letter from Mr. Jordan, telling me that he had informed the person who had answered the advertisement that he was authorised to pay the hundred pounds he demanded, but of course he could not do so till Mr. Levesque had been produced, and his identity had been satisfactorily established.

About an hour afterwards the writer, accompanied by another person whom he introduced as Mr. Edmond Levesque, called at the office in Lincoln's Inn Fields. "I asked the latter," wrote Mr. Jordan, "what proof he had brought of his identity? He told me that at so short a notice he had not been able to collect any, but that if I pleased to question him on any incidents connected with his career and family matters prior to his quarrel with his father I could do so; and then I should be able to judge, from the minute and truthful answers I should receive, that he could be no other than Mr. Levesque's son. I replied that I was not sufficiently acquainted with his family affairs to judge definitely on the subject, but that if he would narrate some of the incidents connected with his quitting his father's house I would forward them to you for your consideration, and then if you authorised me I would pay to his friend the amount he demanded. Your brother inquired how long it would be before I could receive a reply. I told him (as I thought it most prudent not to inform him of your being in England till I was better able to judge of the plausibility of his narrative) that it might be a few days, perhaps earlier, but that he might be certain that as soon as I received a reply to my letter to you and your mother I would instantly inform him. I also told him that as it was possible the reply might be by telegraph, that he and his friend had better hold themselves in readiness to call on me at a moment's warning.

"Your brother then went on to relate certain incidents in his life in almost the same terms you narrated them to me; that disputes had been lamentably frequent between him and his father, in consequence of his refusal to obtain him a commission in the army; how one day, after a warm dispute on the same subject, your father had entrusted him with a sum of money, with which he had decamped—an act which he had ever since repented. He also went into several other details, all tending in my opinion

to prove his identity. He also in personal appearance answered the description you had given of your brother, after taking into consideration the number of years which had passed since you last saw him. He is a well-made man, apparently fully fifty years of age, but in that perhaps I may be mistaken, in consequence of his grey, or rather white hair, for it is nearly the colour of silver. Seeing my gaze fixed on it, he said, 'I see you are noticing my hair, and very possibly think that I am too old to be Mr. Levesque's son; but it is not age that has changed the colour of my hair, but the unceasing remorse and trouble I have for so many years experienced, the consequence of my unworthy conduct when a lad.'

"Although I must admit your brother—for, candidly, I believe him to be so—pleased me in his bearing, appearance, and manner, I cannot say the same of his companion, who had about him an air of low cunning which told by no means in his favour. He objected in rude terms to await your reply, and insisted on being paid the reward agreed on at once, saying he had fulfilled his part of the contract, and that I, as an honest man, was bound to fulfil mine without further delay. Of course to this I would not submit, and they both left the office; your brother in a polite manner, his companion blustering and grumbling at the treatment he had received. A quarter of an hour later your brother returned alone, and requested to see me for a few moments. On being admitted he called my attention to his shabby appearance (in fact, his clothes were in a most dilapidated condition), and requested me to afford him some assistance to purchase some other garments, that he might make a more respectable appearance than he did, adding that those he then had on him were all he possessed. I gave him a cheque for ten pounds, which he endorsed, and he then left me."

Mr. Jordan concluded his letter by requesting me either to come up to London without delay, or if that would be inconvenient to telegraph to him my wishes, as the sooner the matter was settled the better.

CHAPTER LV.

A DISAPPOINTMENT.

So painful was the impression Edmond's admission of guilt had made on me, that I sat for more than half an hour in my chair before I remembered Mr. Jordan's request that I would inform him by telegraph the course I wished him to pursue. Nor am I certain that I should have recovered my self-possession so soon, had I not been aroused by the arrival of the doctor to pay his usual visit to my mother. Meeting him on the stairs, I told him that I had received a pressing request from my solicitor to return to London for a day or two, and that I was unwilling to leave Brighton without his (the doctor's) assurance that there was no immediate danger of a

relapse. I should therefore, I said, feel obliged if he would give me his opinion when he had seen my mother. The doctor then proceeded up-stairs, and I remained in the parlour awaiting his return. From the expression of his countenance when he entered the room, I judged that he had brought me good news; and in this I was not mistaken, for he informed me that my mother was decidedly better than the day before, and that I might certainly leave for a few days without the slightest fear of a relapse. He then advised me to let my intention of leaving the house be kept a secret from her, for although decidedly stronger than she had been for some days past, it was necessary she should hear nothing to cause her sorrow or irritation. I promised to obey his instructions, and he then left the house.

No sooner did I hear the door close after the doctor than I sent for the nurse, and heard from her a corroboration of the statement of the improved state of my mother's health. Feeling assured that I could leave Brighton without any anxiety, I resolved to return that afternoon to London. Having maturely reflected on my plans, I sent a telegraphic despatch to Mr. Jordan, informing him of my contemplated journey to London, and requesting him to let my brother know that I should expect him to call at my house in Gordon Square at five o'clock punctually. I further authorised him, should he think it expedient, to pay the reward which had been promised without further delay, but not to let the recipient know my address. I did this for more than one reason. In the first place I wished the subject off my mind; in the next, I feared that the person who had been instrumental in finding my brother, might, when Edmond would be in better circumstances, use the secret he possessed of his dishonesty to extort money from him under the threat of divulging it.

I arrived at home about four o'clock, an hour before the time fixed for Edmond to call. How heavily did that short hour seem to pass; and yet, I can remember with certainty nothing which occurred. I have a faint idea that my housekeeper related to me, and at considerable length, something that had taken place in the house during my absence, but what it was all about I could not have explained five minutes after she had concluded, so completely were my thoughts engaged on other matters. Tea was then brought in, but whether I tasted it or not I cannot remember. I rather think not, for there was an expression of surprise on the footman's face when I told him to remove the tea-things, though that may have been due to my telling him that if a gentleman called about five o'clock, he might show him up-stairs at once.

It still wanted a quarter of an hour to the time, and I sat with my eyes fixed on the chimney clock, watching the hands as they moved slowly on. Five o'clock at last struck. The sound had hardly ceased when I heard a knock at the street door, and a few

moments afterwards the footman's step and that of a stranger ascending the stairs. The door opened—and Mr. Jordan was announced.

For some moments I stood bewildered, utterly unconscious of what Mr. Jordan said when he addressed me. The idea then suddenly occurred to me that possibly Edmond was behind him, and going to the door I glanced down the staircase, but no one was there. Recovering myself from the disappointment, I requested Mr. Jordan to be seated, and with as much self-possession as I could assume I waited for him to explain the purport of his unexpected visit.

"I dare say you are much surprised to see me Lady Morpeth," he said; "but I can assure you hardly more so than I am at finding myself here. And what renders the whole business the more annoying is, that I am unable to give you any sufficient reason for my visit."

Mr. Jordan then went on to tell me that on receiving my telegraphic message he had sent his clerk to the address given by my brother, and that he had found him in company with the man Jackson who claimed the reward. This was in accordance with the instructions Mr. Jordan had given them the day before, to be both in readiness to call on him in case he should receive any message from me.

"The clerk having given his message," added Mr. Jordan, "the individual calling himself your brother and his friend Jackson left the house with him to call on me. Nothing worthy of notice occurred on their way till they had arrived at the Queen Street corner of Lincoln's Inn Fields, when they perceived a poor wan-looking sailor seated on the step of the first house, leaning his head on his hand, as if suffering from faintness. Suddenly the man looked up at the group as they advanced. His gaze at first seemed without any definite object, but in a moment the expression of his face changed into one of anxious inquiry, as if endeavouring to bring to his memory some conclusion on which he was in doubt. This expression remained so strong on the sailor's face that the attention of the clerk was drawn to it; and imagining himself to be the object of the man's regard, he advanced somewhat nearer to him, though without stopping on his way. The sailor, so far from remarking the clerk, rose from his seat, and passing by him, went towards your brother as if to speak to him.

"As soon as your brother's eyes fell on the man he said to the clerk, 'I've left something behind me. Go on with Jackson to the office, and I will be back with you before ten minutes.' So saying he turned round and hurried off.

"The sailor attempted to follow, but Edmond broke suddenly into so fast a run that the sailor, who was evidently in ill-health, was unable to overtake him.

"Where does that man live?" he said to Jackson.

"How should I know?" was Jackson's sullen reply.

"The clerk's curiosity was now greatly raised, though he said nothing.

"Tell me who that man is," he then asked the clerk.

"He is a friend of this gentleman's," said the clerk, cautiously, "and he knows a great deal more about him than I do."

"Don't tell lies," said Jackson; "how should I know more than you do?"

"You must know where he lives at any rate," said the sailor.

"What do you want him for?" inquired the clerk.

"Before the sailor could give an answer Jackson seized the clerk by the arm, and dragging him forward said, 'Come along and leave him alone, don't you see he's drunk?'

"Although the clerk allowed himself to be led on, he covertly made a sign to the sailor to follow. When he arrived at the office he took Jackson into a private room, telling him to remain there while he went to inform Mr. Jordan.

"Be quick, will you?" said Jackson, who appeared to be getting uneasy.

"The clerk as he left the room whispered to an office boy to tell the sailor to remain outside, and he then entered my room and informed me of all that had occurred, saying he feared there was something wrong.

"I have come to the same conclusion myself," said I to the clerk. "You had better go and converse with the sailor, and do not leave him till this mystery, whatever it may be, is cleared up. In the meantime I will speak to the man Jackson."

"The clerk now left the office, and I proceeded to the room where the man Jackson was waiting.

"I am now prepared," said I, "to pay you the reward promised, but first I must request you to

give me a receipt, drawn up in your own handwriting, dictated by me, which will be to the effect that you acknowledge the receipt of one hundred pounds, as by agreement, for producing Mr. Edmond Levesque, son of Mr. Levesque, formerly silk manufacturer in Spital Square, for whom an advertisement had been inserted in the *Times* and other papers on — day of —."

"What's the use of all that humbug?" said Jackson. "I'm not a going to write all that. I've done my part in the bargain, now you do yours."

"I certainly shall not do it without your giving me that receipt," I replied. "And moreover, as you think fit to use that tone and manner to me, I shall refuse to have any further conversation with you unless in presence of a policeman."

"I then sent the office boy for a policeman, who fortunately found one passing just at the moment.

"If that's your way of doing business, in presence of a policeman," said Jackson, "taint mine. I'm accustomed to do business with honest people, and if you don't pay me that money, I'll get it out of you some way or other, I can tell you that!" so saying, he hurriedly left the room just as the policeman entered.

"I waited for some time to see whether the fellow would come back," continued Mr. Jordan, "but I saw nothing more of him. I then sent a clerk to the banker's with orders to bring back the cheque which I had given the man calling himself your brother. There is the cheque."

I glanced at it for a moment, and not only easily perceived it was not Edmond's handwriting, but that the Christian name had been incorrectly spelt. Edmund, instead of Edmond, as we had always called him.

(To be concluded in our next.)

THROUGH THE CLOSED DOORS.

"Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you."—John xx. 19.



THE earliest appearances of the risen Saviour were made, not to communities or corporate bodies, but to individuals or knots of disciples. The

Lord Jesus appeared to the holy women in the morning: to the two on the road to Emmaus later in the day, and remained with them until early eventide. It was not until later eventide that he appeared to the assembled disciples. It is to this latter appearance we now direct our thoughts. This text from St. John summarises the details of this appearance more concisely than the other Gospels, and introduces one incident—that of the closed doors—which has more significance than might appear at first sight. We shall

do well, however, to consult, in connection with this passage, the parallel ones of Mark xvi. 14, where it is said "he appeared to the Eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart;" and also the more diffuse narrative of St. Luke (xxiv. 33—49), which follows the footsteps of the two on the Emmaus road back to Jerusalem, where they hasten to announce what they have seen to the assembled Eleven.

And here one may be permitted to touch upon a little detail, which seems at first trivial, but is really full of deep pathos. Both St. Mark and St. Luke speak of "the Eleven" assembled. St. Paul in 1 Cor. xv. calls this an appearance to "the

Twelve." There were neither twelve nor eleven—only ten. Judas was dead; Thomas was absent. We can understand St. Paul speaking of the "Twelve." It was the old name Christ had hallowed. But it was only for a few days there had been the "Eleven," and yet they had already learnt that new name for the apostolic band. Is it not so we always think and speak of the dead as utterly cut off from us? Do we ever, for an hour, number them among the living? It was a beautiful idea which led the great poet to make the little child number her dead brothers and sisters amongst her kindred as she kept on saying, "We are seven." How seldom we do so. It is that "great gulf" attributed to death which we seek to bridge over in reflecting upon the appearances of Christ after his bodily death. It is here—as doing away with the notion of utter dissociation by death that these events of the great Forty Days are so valuable. Look at their effects upon those very apostles. It has been truly said:—

"The death of Christ annihilated at a stroke the Messianic expectations of the apostles. Their dejection was complete. But if, after all they had hoped, *nothing* had ever been realised, that dejection could not have passed away."*

The way these same apostles as it were *wrestled* against testimony lifts them at all events out of the class of imaginative seers which modern unbelief would make them. The women's stories they scouted as "idle tales." There had been, we see, an appearance to Peter during the day when Christ showed himself to the two on the Emmaus road; for the eleven—or the ten—greeted them with the tidings, "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon." They gave a sort of half credence to this man's tale; and yet when Jesus himself appeared in their midst, it could be written, "They were affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit"—a ghost, or apparition, as we should term it. What was it they *did* see? They saw the resurrection body of Christ: that body which stood in the same relation to the sacred body laid in the tomb three days since, as our spiritual bodies shall stand to the bodies they lay in our graves. That is the great point we seek to bring out. That it is which gives such a vital interest to this subject. This resurrection of Christ was no exceptional event, but one which as closely typifies what we shall have to go through as his life represents the life of a Christian saint. The differences are no greater in the one case than the other, or than might be expected from the differences of the natures in question. The holy body of the Saviour in death saw no corruption, that of the Christian *sees* corruption—just as the life of the Saviour was sinless, whilst that of the highest saint is always alloyed with the element of sin.

* Neander, "Life of Christ."

Here, then, we see that, on the Sunday evening after Christ had been laid in the tomb on Friday evening, he had already shown himself in a bodily shape five times at least. It appears that preachers and commentators sometimes waste words in labouring to prove that these were not mere visions, and also that Christ had really been dead. If we thought for one moment the appearances were visions, we must suspect the whole evidence: if we thought Christ had not been dead, we must say he was personating a character he had no right to, that of one risen from the dead. What we rather need to do is to try if we can grasp at any features of our own future from what is revealed to us about Christ. He had, then, this resurrection body, like the old fleshly body—in fact, the former body itself (at all events in his case), and yet different in many respects. Notably it stood among the broken circle of the apostles when the doors were shut for fear of the Jews. There had been, of course, instances of something like this in the case of our Lord; but up to this time such appearances and disappearances show rather exceptionally. Now it appears to be the ordinary characteristic of the resurrection body to come and go at will. The spirit is at last master over matter. The body is more likened to its indwelling tenant. Such a body, we are led to believe, we shall put on as soon as our earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved.

It was, moreover, the resurrection body *in a gradual state of ascension*. The ascent from Bethany was only a climax. The whole forty days constituted one series of ascensions. When Mary, greeted by that kindly voice in the grey dawn, put forth her woman's hand to salute the Lord Jesus as of old, he said, "Touch me not;" touch me not, that is—as one has beautifully observed—with the old touch of the past, for I am not yet ascended to my Father. I have not yet entered into those relations where I may be touched with the equally loving but necessarily more reverent and spiritual touch of the future—but, he adds, "Go to my brethren, and tell them I ascend—I am ascending—to my Father, and your Father, to my God and your God."* We cannot have failed sometimes to ask ourselves where was Christ (as well as what was he) during these forty days? He only showed himself on a few rare occasions, as far as we know. The old intimate life of association was over, just as *all* association seems to be over when our home is desolated by the death of one dear to us. Does not the light of this revelation shed a very sun-ray in that darkest of all places, the heart shadowed by the loss of such a one? Christ on leaving this life sped at once, and without a moment's suspension

* Bishop Ellicott's "Historical Lectures on the Life of our Lord."

of consciousness, as far as we can see, to the unseen world, carrying on in some mysterious way unknown to us the great work of man's redemption. Then he re-visits earth; hovers round the old familiar scenes of Judea and Galilee: is gradually seen less frequently, and finally soars to God's right hand from the Ascension Mount. Can we fail to read herein an index of our spirit's career when this poor preface we call life is over, and when that spirit enters on its *real* life, on the only life worthy of the name? Is it not that very belief that is enshrined in the words of the familiar hymn?—

“Changed from glory into glory
Till we stand before God's face:
Casting down our crowns before Him,
Lost in wonder, love, and praise! ”

The periods of our experience—the length of our different stages of spiritual growth may vary from Christ's (just as his bodily life was short compared with ours), but we may depend upon it, his is the clear *index* of such experience. What also does the life of the forty days mean if not this? As clearly as his life from Bethlehem to Calvary was meant to teach us how to live and how to die, so surely is this life meant to show us the life that succeeds so-called death. We grasp the condition of Christ, then, at three stages of ascension so to say. First in the world of waiting spirits, wherever that mysterious region may be. Secondly, rising from this region to the old world of former life, and appearing at certain rare intervals to the opened eyes of those who were morally qualified to see him; and thirdly, passing beyond all mortal sight into greater (in his case to nearest) nearness to God. Just as we, like those spirits in prison, may have to spend far more than the three days Christ spent in that place of waiting, that antechamber of spiritual existence, so may the forty days during which he lingered around earth be indefinitely extended. As our bodies are corruptible—as our souls are sinful—so too often the whole tone and character of our life has been of the earth, earthy. And if you ask—as you will be sure to ask—whether there may be on our parts, or on the parts of those gone from us, the power or the desire to take interest in the affairs of this world, one can but point you to these appearances of the Saviour, and the almost equally significant passage in the story of the rich man and Lazarus, where we find the sinner in the unseen world panting to undo some of the wrong he did in this. And in connection with these we may read the words of a thoughtful writer:—

“A condition of suspended powers, and of destitution such as we now attribute to the human soul through its intermediate period, may very naturally be imagined to involve, perhaps, a strong tendency or appetency towards the open world of

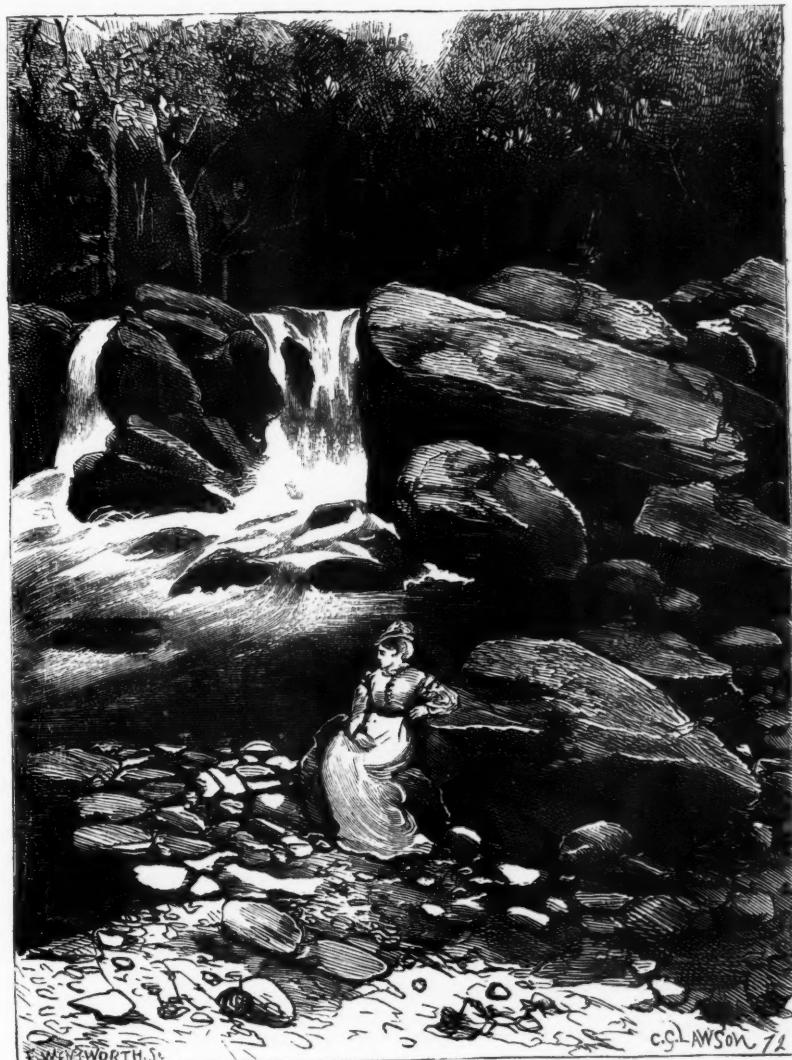
power and action—there may be a yearning after the lost corporeity, or after the expected corporeity: there may be a pressing on toward the busy frequented walks of active existence. Now let it be just imagined that, as almost all natural principles and modes of life are open to some degree of irregularity, and admit exceptive cases, so this *pressure of the innumerable community of the dead towards the precincts of life* may, in some cases, actually break through the boundaries that hem in the ethereal crowds, and so it may happen, as if by trespass, that the dead may, in single instances, impinge upon the ground of common corporeal life.”*

These are questions that admit perhaps of nothing more than a probable solution. At least, however, there is not the smallest reason for avoiding them. What we should do is, put them side by side with these revelations of Christ's resurrection and gradual ascension, and treat the matter with prayerful meditation. Surely it is well they should be asked, and—thus, at all events—answered. They serve to draw out the intense reality of this resurrection life, and to give it that place and meaning in the series of Divine dealings with us, which else it would seem to lack, unless, that is, it bear some such direct application to our own history and experiences. The great point on which we wish to be assured, and which certainly this portion of the sacred history does assure us most clearly of, is that there is no gap, no break in the chain of being. Christ, dead on Calvary, was alive at once in the unseen world, preaching among the spirits in prison. Missing from the garden grave, he showed himself five times on the day but one after loving hands laid him there, to Magdalene and the other holy women, to the two on the Emmaus road, to Peter, and now to the assembled apostles and disciples, Thomas excepted. The rich man and Lazarus, directly they died here, took up the changed thread of their broken history on the other side the grave. The penitent thief was to be, not at some distant day, but that very day, with his Saviour in paradise. All points to the same two facts, first—immediate consciousness, and secondly, gradual progress.

“Nearer, my God, to Thee, nearer to Thee!”

All collateral questions rank subordinate to these two. There is another that is sure to come across all our minds here: If there be progress should there not be prayer? Can I help those who have gone forward? Will those I leave behind be able to help me? We may not say so; though we know it is of the nature of an instinct so to pray—an instinct of our erring nature that finds utterance on the tombstone of many a sleeper laid to rest by loving hands. Let us pray, though, for ourselves

* Isaac Taylor's “Physical Theory of Another Life.”



(Drawn by C. GORDON LAWSON.)

"On this grey stone I sit and muse apart,
While the sweet water-music fills my heart"—p. 842.

—not them. But we may think on them in prayer, for we are blended in the communion of saints—a communion which these consoling subjects on which we are now engaged, assure us death cannot in the faintest degree interrupt.

We "bless God's holy name for all his servants departed this life in his faith and fear." Let us "beseech him to give us grace so to follow their good example, that we with them may be partakers of his heavenly kingdom."

BY THE STREAM.



LONELY spot—a rushing mountain stream,
On this grey stone I sit and muse apart,
While the sweet water-music fills my heart,
And lulls my senses to a waking dream.

No sound save that of water. Silent hills,
In all their quiet grandeur close around,
Zoned with the golden gorse, with heather
crowned,
Feeding the stream with tributary rills.

I watch the wayward torrent onward roll,
Anxious as life, and never long at rest,
Even as my heart, still craving to be blest
With something that it has not—some bright goal

Hitherto unattained. Here gloomy rocks
Darken the stream and hide the summer skies;
There, right athwart the bed a boulder lies,
And in a narrow space the water locks.

'Tis quiet for a moment—then it leaps
Forth into sunshine, many a rainbow hue
Around it flashes—takes in heaven's blue,
Or by the banks in waves of silver sweeps.

God's sun is shining—though the shadows fall
O'er troubled waters, and though rocks arise:
Through chance, through change, we look beyond
the skies
To Him who ruleth, leadeth, loveth all.

E. C.

THE DINGY HOUSE AT KENSINGTON.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "ABOUT NELLIE," "THE TROUBLES OF CHATTY AND MOLLY," ETC.

CHAPTER XVI.

MHEN Polly raised her face and Robert Welch saw the expression of misery, almost of desperation in it, the ice he had tried to heap round his heart melted in a moment.

"Polly—my dear Polly!" he said, "what can be the matter?" and he was by her side, taking her restless hands in his, and as much her slave as ever. She looked gratefully at the honest, kindly countenance, and then with the desperation written in her face fast taking possession of her heart, and thinking how dreadful it would be to go to Benthwaite, she asked, "Do you love me as much as ever?"

"More," he answered, "fifty times more if possible. I always have loved you, Polly; I always shall, as long as I live. My poor darling, if you would only let me; I do not ask you to care for me back again, but if you'd only let me try to make you happy, I would devote all my life to you, dear, for you do not know what you are to me!"—extravagant words, but he meant them all.

She took up the paper and read it once again; then she turned and answered wearily, "Very well, let it be so."

"Oh, Polly! my love—my own darling, do you really mean it—are you mine at last!" and he put his arms round her in right of ownership already. She almost shuddered as she drew herself gently away.

"No, don't do that," she said pleadingly; "and don't call me darling and love," she added impatiently; "I never could see any meaning in all those silly words." Yet she liked them really, but because that other man, to whom she had given all her heart, had never addressed them to her, she could not bear that this man, for whom she had no heart left, should say them. She rose and stood by the mantelpiece, playing idly with the lid of a little mock bronze inkstand which stood on it for ornament, while Robert Welch looked at her—that low-browed, dark-haired, downcast woman, with the sorrowful grace of a Greek slave, who had promised to be his wife. She was very different from the girl with flushed cheeks and sleepy eyes, and smiles which came and went like spring sunshine, whom he had first learned to love, and yet she was much more lovable.

Then he spoke. "Polly," he said humbly, "do you think you will ever love me?" But she only looked up at him with grave eyes which slowly filled with tears, and lips that quivered but would not speak. "Never mind," he said hurriedly, "I will not ask you; I will ask you something else instead. Will you go and see my people at Liverpool for a little while before going to Benthwaite? They would receive you gladly."

She caught at his proposal eagerly, and agreed to it at once; and with a yearning for a little affection

that was free from all thought of marriage, or giving in marriage, she said wistfully, "Perhaps they may like me a little bit, Robert, if I try to make them."

He had pleaded for an immediate union, but she could not bring herself to consent to it, though she felt it would be best, so he had to be content with the victory he had already gained; but she was ready and grateful to go to Liverpool, and that pleased him greatly.

"Do you know," she said suddenly, "I cannot help thinking I hear papa in the next room; yet I do not know what he can have returned for at this time of day. Wait here, Robert, and I will go and see."

She went into the study; her father was there, almost crouching down in the chair, his hands clutching the table and his face haggard and pale.

"Come here, Polly," he said hoarsely, beckoning her as she entered. "I want you—I want you, my dear!" He frightened her by his nervously excited manner. "I am ruined, Polly—quite ruined; I have lost everything I possessed, every shilling. I did it all for your sake," he continued in his old whining tone. "I wanted to make you a rich woman, and I knew you were fond of Welch; I knew it all the time, my dear." He scarcely understood what he was saying, and he still clutched at the table with nervous, trembling hands.

"Oh, papa!" she exclaimed. She knew that Jack's death had made him just a little reckless, and though she did not believe in his total ruin, and did not love or know the value of money sufficiently to be very deeply grieved by it if it were true, yet she pitied him and forgave him his pitiful excuse (which she knew he did not himself believe in), and she put her hands on his shoulder a moment out of sympathy as if to caress him, then quickly withdrew them; it seemed so strange to caress her father. For the first time in her life she was not repulsed. Henry Dawson drew her face to his and kissed it while the tears rolled down his cheeks. "You must be off to-morrow," he said. "This affair will kill me, Polly—it will kill your poor old father. There, go away. What does Welch want with me, I wonder?"

"My brother died intestate, so all he had was mine, and Jack was ill and my wife and all of them, so I said nothing about it out of consideration for their feelings, I thought it would be such a shock for them." Henry Dawson's eyes refused to meet Robert Welch's as he gave his explanation, and his hands trembled more violently still.

"He did not die intestate, Mr. Dawson."

"What do you mean, sir?" he almost shouted; "do you suppose I destroyed the will, or what? I only kept his death quiet out of consideration for all your feelings. I intended to do something for you, Welch, but it's all gone, and I'm a ruined man," and he began to cry like a child.

"Your brother made a will just before he left

England, Mr. Dawson, leaving all he possessed to your son, with the exception of a thousand pounds to myself, and that will be lodged at a solicitor's office at Liverpool. It will now have to be proved." Strange as it might seem the words were almost a relief to Henry Dawson.

"If I had had any idea," he began—"I give you my word, Welch, I had no idea of such a thing, and I intended all I had for you and Polly. She's so fond of you. You would not be hard on her father, the only relation left to take care of her," he whined; but Robert Welch turned away from his hypocrisy in contempt.

"I think we had better talk this over in the morning, Mr. Dawson; we shall then both have had more time to think the matter over."

Polly heard her father walking up and down for hours that night—up and down, up and down, without stopping. The tears came into her eyes once when she thought of that first and last evidence of affection he had given her when he kissed her that evening. She would have gone to him had she dared, but could not gather courage to do so. Presently his footsteps stopped for a moment, but she did know why. He had halted in front of the shelf on which were placed, in a little pile, all covered with dust, the books poor Jack had prized so much. Fearingly and miserably he took up the Bible, and, for the first time since he had had it, opened it. Was it fate or chance that the first words which met his eyes were: "Like as a father pitith his children, so is the Lord merciful?" He could not see more, but with a sigh that was almost a groan he closed the book and put it back into its place.

The next morning Robert Welch was sent for in dread and haste, and when the door was broken open Henry Dawson was found dead in his study. The loss of his son had been a great trouble to him, but the loss of his money had killed him.

CHAPTER XVII.

POLLY never knew much about her father's death, nor what had passed in his study on the previous evening during his interview with Robert Welch. The latter insisted on her going at once to Liverpool, where his friends received her kindly, and were pleased and glad to make much of the sorrowful, sweet-faced girl, who came to them in the character of their nephew's future wife. She was so grateful for their kindness, so eager to win their affection, and listened so patiently to all their praises of Robert Welch, that they did not wonder that he had fallen in love with her. It never once occurred to them that she could do otherwise than reciprocate his affection, for as he was all the world to them, so they thought he must be to every one else.

Robert Welch stayed in London a week or two, arranging matters at Kensington, and attending to

the inquest and all the painful formalities consequent on Henry Dawson's death. He understood, on looking through his papers, why Frederic Dawson's death had been concealed. The evening the lawyer had reached Dover his brother made a second will, identical with the first, but decreasing Robert Welch's legacy to five hundred pounds, a circumstance easily accounted for by the fact that all the letters Robert Welch had given the lawyer to forward to his brother, he found unopened and unposted, with the concealed will, in the safe in the study. Strange that criminals are so often loth to destroy the evidence of their guilt!

"It was too bad," he exclaimed; "he might have had the money—but to let my best friend think I had neglected him! I understand now why he concealed the death. It saved all unpleasant questions and surmises, and he could equally administer to his effects as having died intestate."

Henry Dawson had fallen into his own trap though, for he had never reckoned on his brother having made any disposition of his property before leaving England; thus the will he concealed, because he grudged the five hundred pounds to Robert Welch, only made that one valid which gave him a thousand. Robert Welch never told Polly of either will. Once the money would have helped him on, now he had done without it, and he valued her feelings more than any worldly gain; besides, without leaving her penniless, there was not enough left to pay the legacy. He contrived from the general wreck to save the lease of the dingy house and a stray hundred or two for her; and when he returned to Liverpool, and she met him at the door with a quiet, "I am glad you have come home, Robert," he was more than repaid for all the generosity of which she did not know.

Polly was so altered he scarcely knew her again—so ill and thin and worn, with a look of Jack in her face that frightened him; yet she declared that she was quite well. She was very gentle and kind to him, not even turning impatiently away at the constant repetition of his love, and always ready to go for a walk with him when he asked her. What dreary walks they were, neither having anything to say to the other, yet each feeling that one of them ought to say something; and each thinking—oh, how differently!—he that he was very happy, and yet wondering that he did not feel it more intensely ("but I suppose one never does," he thought); she longing to turn round and implore him to give her back her freedom, to put her in chains and make a galley-slave of her, to kill her on the spot—to do anything in the world save what he did, and was going to do—love her and marry her. "If I had only never bound myself by my own act and deed!" she cried inwardly. "He seems like my own doom everlasting creeping at my side." Then she would reproach herself when alone for her own coldness. "He is so kind," she thought,

"and so generous and good, and if he only would not marry me I could love him dearly as a brother; but then I never shall love any one properly again as long as I live, and it is in my power to make poor Robert Welch so happy, and I'll try—oh, I will try!" yet all the time her heart travelled back with her memory to the dingy house at Kensington, and the face she had last seen disappearing across the summer fields at Ealing. "I must be wicked, dreadfully wicked," she sobbed bitterly, "for I cannot make myself forget him, and it is so very wrong even to think of him now."

Well, there could be but one ending of it all: she pined and moped and struggled with herself until she fell ill—dreadfully ill, with brain-fever, and for days and weeks her life hung on a thread. All the winter she was in her room, and it was not till the spring came that she was once more down-stairs. Then the time for her marriage, which had been put off till May, was fast approaching. It was agreed that before it took place she should go and spend one month at Benthwaite, for her aunt would not be reconciled to not seeing her at all, and Polly, though she dreaded going, could not refuse. She was not strong enough to stand the journey till the first days of April, and then Robert Welch—faithful, thoughtful Robert Welch—would not let her travel alone, but got a holiday so as to take her as far as Windermere and see her into the Benthwaite coach. Polly was very grave still, yet very sweet and thoughtful; and there was one quiet peacefulness at her heart she had never known before—Jack's question was answered at last.

"Polly," Robert said, the evening before she started, "I want to talk to you; will you come for a walk?" She went immediately, wondering why he had become so quiet, almost sad and cold lately. "We shall never have another walk together," he said, when they were strolling over some quiet fields beyond Edge Hill, "for I am going to ask you—not to come back again." She looked up at him in astonishment, and saw a look of misery on his face which she had not thought it possible it could wear. "I'll tell you why, dear," and he drew her arm through his. He would not have ventured to do so in a common way. "I know why you are going to marry me, Polly—because I love you. There is some one else—I found it all out when you were ill, dear." He did not tell her he knew also who it was (he had not noticed the marriage in the paper). "The others did not understand, but I did. You are quite free, Polly. My poor darling," he said suddenly, looking down yearningly into her face, "why didn't you tell me the truth? Do you think I do not love you more than myself—your happiness more than my own?"

"Oh, Robert! I don't—" but her lips could not say the words. "No one else cares for me, and I am very grateful to you, and will try and love you back in time, and be worthy of you. Robert dear, I will

indeed, if you will marry me," she said pleadingly; for she knew without any vanity how dear she was to him.

He looked at her again; it was a sore temptation, he loved her so much. "No," he answered; "don't say that again, darling, or you will drive me mad. Go to-morrow to Benthwaite, dear, and remember you are quite free; and if ever you are going to be married, write and tell me. I could not be sorry for your happiness——"

"Oh no, no!"

"Well, if ever, a long, long time hence, you are single, and can say with all your heart, 'Come,' then I will gladly, dear; but I know now that it is impossible. We will always be friends, Polly—very great friends," he said, repeating the words she had once said to him. "Do not tell my people; I will myself, when you are gone;" so his thoughtfulness saved her even that embarrassment.

It was a very strange journey they took together the next day. They hardly spoke in the train, but when Polly looked up once or twice at the face he so vainly tried to make cheerful, she was more nearly loving him than ever she had been in her life. When they reached Windermere at about seven in

the evening, and stood waiting in the courtyard of the great hotel for the coach which was to take Polly on, Robert Welch nearly broke down. "If ever, though it is ever such a long time hence, you can send for me, Polly——" He did not say more, but she understood him. Then they heard the breaking of the coach wheels in the distance.

"God bless you, dear Robert," Polly said. "There is no one in this world so good as you;" and taking his hands she kissed them humbly, while he longed to break down the barriers between them, and just for one single instant to hold her to his heart; but he did not dare. He looked at her once more, but he could scarcely see the sweet face he loved so well in the darkness which gathered round it. Then he helped, almost lifted her into the coach, and wrung her hands, but still he could not speak. The coach moved, and he strained his eyes to take one last look at the face pressed against the window-pane, and stood still, almost dazed and stupefied, till the heavy lumbering vehicle was out of sight and hearing. He turned away then, and rushed back to catch the mail train, and returned to Liverpool with all his life before him, and all his world behind.

(To be concluded.)

NEAR THE ARCH.

I.

IFT up your heads, ye gates!
Be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors!
'Tis He who conquered in our strife that
waits
To pace His temple-floors.

II.

O gates, where rise your towers?
What name is graven o'er your solemn arch?
Where shall the King of Glory choose His bowers,
Where peals His organ-march?

III.

Not in the heavens alone,
Where angel-princes bear their stately part
In His high glory; for He makes a throne
E'en of the cleansed heart.

IV.

When came the kings of old
From hard-fought fields, with wondrous trophies won,
In some deep chancel drooped the banner's fold;
And homage high was done,

V.

Where clustering pillars arched
In forest-aisles beneath the storied fane,
While grandly as the bright procession marched,
Thrilled victory's high strain.

VI.

But when to us, alas!
Our Saviour cometh, what can meet His eye?
Like broken pillars on the abbey grass
Our hearts in ruin lie.

VII.

Wild is the stormy light—
He hears no organ-peal of joy and praise.
A few fair broken arches, through the night
Their saddened beauty raise.

VIII.

Yet turns He not away
From that dumb place, restored at such a cost.
Ah, crumbling portal! He hath come to-day
To seek and save the lost!

ALESSIE BOND.

KATIE'S JACKET.

BY THE HON. MRS. GREENE, AUTHOR OF "CUSHIONS AND CORNERS," ETC.

PART III.

PERHAPS, out of the whole party, the one who enjoyed herself least during the long evening was Looey. The miserable conviction kept thrusting itself upon her most unseasonably, that she had behaved selfishly and unkindly all the day. When she glanced up at her mother's usually kind and pleasant face, she had no responsive look, or glance of sympathising love. Her aunt's manner, too, seemed less warm and friendly towards her than was customary, and altogether she felt strangely alone and miserable among the crowd of happy, joyous children, whose hearts were not burdened with the same load of conscious guilt; and when at length the pleasures of the evening were ended, and the carriage drew up to the door, Katie almost immediately fell asleep with her head on her mother's shoulder, while Looey, kept wide awake by the stings of a wounded conscience, wished earnestly that the day could begin over again, that she might act differently, and win back the ease of mind, the love and sympathy of her mother, and the approbation of her aunt.

But, alas! days of sin cannot be so easily lived over again, nor can ungenerous actions be so easily forgotten by those who witness them, and many days rolled heavily by for Looey under the conscious ban of her mother's displeasure and disappointment, and under the still stronger conviction that by her selfishness and wilful temper she had offended and displeased God.

From Katie's mind, on the contrary, all thoughts of the day's struggle, as far as her own feelings were concerned, passed quickly away. She only remembered the wonderful scenes in the magic lantern, and the almost incredible feats of the Japanese troupe, and many a pleasant half hour she spent with her mother, talking over and guessing at the manner in which the tricks had been performed. In fact, the whole affair of the jacket would, in all probability, have died completely and for ever from her mind, had not a most unexpected and, to her, amazing event, occurred a few days later, which brought the matter vividly back to her mind, and stamped it for ever in Looey's heart in connection with her own selfishness and vanity.

It happened thus. On the Saturday succeeding the day of their aunt's party, just as the children were sitting down to their tea in the school-room, having chosen and prepared their Sunday portions of Scripture to repeat to their mother on the following day, a loud ring was heard at the hall bell, and presently a man's voice was heard in the vestibule below, com-

municating some intelligence to the servant who had opened the door.

The children were not allowed to leave the school-room or to look over the banisters on the arrival of either visitors or friends, and although Katie felt sure she heard her own name mentioned, she persuaded Looey to remain quietly in her place, knowing that if there was anything that really concerned her, they would hear it in good time.

They had not long to wait, for the school-room door was presently thrown open and Martha entered, bearing in her arms a large brown paper parcel and a blue bonnet-box, both addressed to Katie. With much and anxious beating of the heart, and trembling of fingers, the two little girls gathered round the parcels and unfastened the many knots that guarded them, and when all the brown paper was removed and the lid raised from the box, out came a beautiful sealskin jacket and a hat trimmed just like Marion Strangways', with a white ostrich feather and a beautiful tuft taken from a peacock's breast. They were both addressed to Katie, and inside the sleeve of the jacket was a note, also directed to her, written in her aunt's well-known small but regular handwriting.

Katie blushed a great deal as she read the contents of the letter, but she seemed anxious that Looey should not see it, and having glanced rather hastily through it, she crumpled it up and thrust it into her pocket.

"Oh, Looey! I wish you had been sent one also," she cried, as her sister nervously smoothed the beautiful brown skin of the jacket, and strove valiantly to keep back her own keen sense of mortification and pain.

"No, Katie, you deserved them and I didn't." These words actually burst from Looey's lips; they were the result of a week's misery of mind, as well as of the last hour's careful study of the portion of Scripture she had chosen for her Sunday's repetition.

Katie looked up in annoyance, for she had not seen the secret grief at work all the long week in poor Looey's heart, and this was the first allusion, or even recognition, of Katie's goodness which Looey had made since the morning of Aunt Mary's party.

"I tell you what we will do," cried Katie, good-naturedly, "I will keep the jacket, and you, Looey, shall have the hat."

But Looey had already rushed from the room, and hidden herself behind a large trunk in the lumber-room. She could no longer keep back the bitter tears of mortification called forth by the sight of her sister's well-deserved presents, and knowing how selfish was her sorrow, she desired most earnestly to hide it from both Katie's eyes and her mother's.

It was a very hard struggle for poor Looey. Again and again she raised herself up from the ground in the dark and dried her eyes, thinking she conquered her grief, but again and again her tears and sobs broke forth, and though she heard Katie calling her, and searching for her all through the house, she could not make up her mind to come out of the hiding-place.

At last the struggle came to an end, as all such struggles would do, if we only had the moral courage to face them at once in a strength not our own, but given us from above. Looey rose from her crouching position on the floor, placed her elbows on the old trunk, and covered her eyes with her hands. It was only a short prayer, a few broken words uttered by a very contrite little heart, but they had their calming effect, and Looey, having smoothed her hair in her room and bathed her eyes, rejoined her sister in the school-room, and after tea, when they descended to the drawing-room, Looey was loudest in her praises of her Aunt Mary's kindness and thoughtfulness, and rejected with decision all offers of a division of the gifts.

Mrs. Browne found it very hard to account for the unusual gentleness of Looey's manner, and the unselfish pleasure she showed in Katie's happiness, and long after the children had retired to bed she pondered over it all in her mind.

The next day, however, brought the solution of the puzzle, and opened her eyes to the struggle which had been going on in her little girl's heart. When Looey brought her Bible to her mother's bedside early on Sunday morning, there was something in her manner, something in the expression of her eyes, which arrested Mrs. Browne's attention; and as her little girl repeated the texts she had chosen and learnt by heart the evening before, the trembling voice and downcast look confirmed her mother in the idea that she had chosen the subject expressly as being applicable to her own faults and shortcomings.

The words of the Bible which she repeated aloud were these: "Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price."

Mrs. Browne usually explained the morning's reading to each of her little girls separately, drawing for them the moral the text was intended to convey, and pointing it specially to the difficulties and temptations they were likely to meet with during the coming week, or going back with them over the occurrences of the past one. But this morning she said nothing; no words of hers could have strengthened the moral so simply but beautifully expressed, and Looey's shy, sensitive nature would have shrunk from a more personal application. Just one glance of a renewed sympathy passed between them, and a hearty kiss of reconciliation, and Looey left the room, comforted in the

sure conviction of both God's forgiveness and her mother's.

After breakfast that morning Katie insisted on Looey's acceptance of her white jacket, which was still quite fresh and pretty. Looey took it from her very shyly, but very gratefully. She longed to tell Katie how much she had felt her great kindness and unselfishness, but it was very difficult to say, and it was only on their way to church, as their Aunt Mary's carriage rolled by and she nodded pleasantly to the children, that Looey at last contrived to whisper a few words of gratitude and love into her sister's ear.

Aunt Mary sat in the same pew with the children, and her keen eyes, always alive to take in what was good and generous, as well as what was faulty, seemed to guess the whole position of affairs. She smiled very pleasantly to Looey as they went out into the porch, and gave the two girls a seat home in her carriage, and though Looey did not become till the following winter the happy possessor of a sealskin jacket or hat like Katie's, still she carried about with her from henceforward what was better still, and called forth even more admiration from all beholders, "even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price."

"THE QUIVER" BIBLE CLASS.

314. The reason given for the precept, "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers," contains an allusion to the history of three Old Testament characters. Name them.

315. Our Lord, during his public ministry, quotes a passage from the prophecy of Hosea on two occasions. Give it.

316. Two of the feasts observed by the Jews were instituted by human authority. Name them.

317. The deeds of Gideon, as recorded in the Book of Judges, are clearly referred to in three other passages of Scripture. Give them.

318. In the Book of Esther there is but one religious observance mentioned. What is it?

319. Quote accurately the only definition of faith that is given in the Bible.

320. Quote a verse which shows that in the early Christian Church there was a belief in the guardianship of angels over individuals.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON PAGE 815.

303. "The people said unto Samuel, Who is he that said, Shall Saul reign over us?" (1 Sam. xi. 12).

304. "I have given you cleanliness of teeth in all your cities" (Amos iv. 6).

305. "Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell" (Gen. iv. 5).

306. It is not God's will that "one of these little ones should perish" (Matt. xviii. 14). "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repented" (Luke xv. 10).

B I B L E N O T E S.

THE TALENTS (Matt. xxv. 14-30).



HE kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods."

A custom is referred to here, altogether unknown amongst us. With us no master of a household going away would leave with his servants moneys wherewith to trade in his absence; nor if he did could he punish them on his return for neglect of duty. Slaves or servants amongst the ancients, in the East especially, were artisans, or were allowed to engage in other pursuits, paying often a fixed yearly sum to their masters, or as here, money was given to them wherewith to trade, and to make a certain portion of profit.

This parable was spoken to point out the responsibilities that lie upon every man to use aright the talents entrusted to each one's care. Christ represents himself as a master going into a far country, who gives to his servants the charge of certain goods in his absence. It is a parable for all time and for all classes. Different men receive these gifts in different measures. It is He who makes the difference, and it is in respect of these differences between man and man that the principal questions are raised among us as to our responsibility. And concerning these we have special information from Him who is best able to instruct us.

"Unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability." The word "talent," as used here, does not mean a man's personal "ability," or capacity, but something external to the man himself; something given in proportion to, and in consideration of, his "ability." Each is bound to make use of the "goods" of Providence thus placed at his disposal; and is bound, because the goods, or talents, as they are called, assigned to each are precisely suitable to his ability. From this it would appear that there is no amount of difference between man and man which is not regulated according to the capacity of the individual by Him, "Whose we are, and whom we serve." Having thus given his servants occupation for their time during his absence, he "straightway," or without further delay, "took his journey." Verses 17, 18, 19 show how they were engaged while the master was away, and tell us distinctly how every man is employed between our Lord's first and second coming: that some are faithful in the things committed to them, diligent in the discharge of their duties; and that others fail to make use of the divinely imparted gifts which have been bestowed upon them.

"After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them." The servants who had done

their duty, and had not misspent their time, nor wasted their opportunities, gladly came forward to meet him and inform him how they had been engaged in his absence, and what result had attended the exertions they had made. Their gain was according to their talents—five for five, two for two. Consistently with this, the commendation of the servants is expressed in exactly the same language, and the reward given to each is precisely the same, "Enter thou into the joy of thy lord." They had something to show, each kept his place and station, and each did his duty truly. He who had received but one talent might have done the same, but he did not. He only murmured at his position and its requirements, complained that he was hardly dealt with; and though he knew what would be required of him—as conscience will always remind the very lowest—yet he only upbraided that just and considerate lord, who had given to him, as to the others, "according to his ability." Here we are taught that the Lord looks for fidelity in little as well as in much. And because the servant lacked this fidelity, therefore he lingered to the last, being reluctant to appear in the presence of his lord. The warning here is *not* for those who waste their master's goods and spend them in riotous living, *but* for those who hide their talent and fail to make due use of the religious advantages placed at their disposal, who neglect their opportunities, instead of serving their generation according to the will of God. For this his neglected duty, for this his sullen coldness of service, he was condemned as an "unprofitable servant." His punishment consisted of two parts—first he was deprived of the talent that had been given to him, and secondly the command went forth that instead of joining his lord in the celebration for his return, he was to be cast into outer darkness.

There is a solemn lesson for us to be drawn from this parable. Complaint against our assigned position is the mark of the profitless servant who upbraided his lord. As God is just, he has given to us "according to our several ability." Let us use what he in his infinite wisdom has seen fit to give us, and all will be well with us at last—we shall reap if we faint not. We need not compare our circumstances with those of others; we need not ask for more talents than we have. It will be well for us if our Lord when he cometh shall welcome us as "faithful in a little." He, and he alone, fixes the measure of our present lot, he will take account of it in his own way; take account of it in mercy, and in mercy bestow abundant reward, if we have been "faithful in a very little;" for we may rest satisfied that the Judge of all the earth will do right.